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# Nutrition and Fitness in Norwegian Culture

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# NUTRITION & FITNESS IN NORWEGIAN CULTURE

[ABOUT](#)[DAILY LIVING](#)[FITNESS](#)[NUTRITION](#)[SURVEY](#)[RESOURCES](#)

This observational research study showed that Norwegian skiing and hiking traditions, availability of active transportation, and implemented food systems such as the KeyHole and the Bread Scale system have each contributed to an overall healthier lifestyle in Norway when compared to the lifestyle in the United States. Norwegians take advantage of their surrounding natural landscape, and their love for nature makes it easier for them to remain active even during long winters. Observing Norway's successes in promoting and maintaining a healthy lifestyle could help increase the quality of life and decrease the prevalence of chronic diseases in those who reside in other cultures such as the United States.

Marte Johannessen, Kinesiology, University of Rhode Island

# Norwegian Tradition

Norwegians pride themselves on their cultural success of skiing. If you ever watch the winter Olympics, so many of the cross country skiers, alpine skiers, and ski jumpers are Norwegian. The majority of Norwegians ski on the weekends. It is an incredible workout for the entire body, and requires strength and endurance.

## "Friluftsliv"

On the first day of my travels in Norway, I went to a student orientation. They taught us a Norwegian word called "friluftsliv." They described this as the way of life in Norway. Friluftsliv is defined as having a love for the outdoors, to connect with nature, and to spend active time in the fresh air in order to feel alive. I found that the majority of Norwegians take Friluftsliv to heart, and are outdoors as much as they are able to be.





# Active Transportation



"Bicycle Crossing"



Norway offers a tremendous number of easily accessible walkways and bike paths. Every city and town that I encountered had very wide, and freshly paved walkways. These paths were separated from the roads, preventing any accidents with traffic. The paths were cleaned and taken care of daily by the city. If the bike path ever intersected with traffic, which was very rare, large signs marked this area.

# Nutritional Systems – The KeyHole



“ The Keyhole is the world's first nutrition label to be backed by the authorities in multiple countries ”

While walking through grocery stores in Norway, you will immediately notice a symbol that is printed directly on many food packages. This label is a way for customers to quickly identify which products are considered healthy, low in sugar, fat, and salt, yet higher in fiber. In order for foods to have the green keyhole placed on them, they must meet specific criteria, which varies depending on the food group.

There are many advantages to the keyhole system. Consumers with no prior knowledge about nutrition are able to identify healthier options quickly and easily. I surveyed Norwegian students and asked if they knew what the keyhole system was; 100% of them answered yes. Currently, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark all participate in the keyhole system.

[Summary of The KeyHole](#)

# Nutritional Systems – The Bread Scale



The Federation of Norwegian Food and Drink Industry put in place a scale which is found on bread and cracker packages. As shown above, the scale identifies how much of the bread is "grovt", or whole grain.

Each of the four symbols represent how much whole grain flour is used in relation to the entire food product. Grain flour from wheat, rye, barley and oats are all acceptable.



# Fitness Education



The training facilities at the University of Southeast Norway were very similar to one you might find in the USA. Common equipment such as TRX, a spinning studio, free weights, and "LifeFitness" machines were all available.

The Norwegian University where I studied offered an area of study called sports, physical education, and outdoor life. In this area of study, students can take multiple classes such as exercise and health management, Nordic skiing and outdoor life, outdoor education and experiential learning, as well as physical education, sports, culture, and society.

# Further Information...

While abroad, I documented my travels and photographs on a website, linked below.

If you would like to read more about how I believe the Norwegian culture encourages a healthy lifestyle, please click below!

[My Blog](#)

